



Running Postman



AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY – MELTON & BACCHUS MARSH INC

APRIL MEETING

Overview by Ron Powers

Yes, while we were all enjoying Graeme's presentation on one of the most challenging to grow and interesting to look at plants, Cathy was freezing her assets in South Dakota. How lucky we are, as a group, to have such a dynamic person within our membership. Graeme's presentation inspires us to try including a banksia in our garden, all the while knowing that most species can be difficult to grow in this locale. The photos provided by his talented wife (Ros) complimented the talk with examples of the plants' beauty and diversity. A banksia is a versatile addition to any garden.



Photos by Cathy Powers

Banksia blooms grow in dense spikes with up to thousands of tiny individual flowers arranged in complex patterns to form the flower head. The shape of the flower head varies from spherical to cylindrical and, with colours ranging from creamy yellows to vivid oranges, scarlets and purples, there is something for everyone.

One enemy of the banksia is *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. Excellent drainage will minimize an attack and assist the plant to remain healthy for you to enjoy all year.

*Thanks,
Graeme, for
a fun and
interesting
evening.*

Points to remember: Best time to plant is between March and September. If it has a lignotuber, you can prune to the base and if no lignotuber, prune lightly.

CALENDAR EVENTS

2013

26th June

Meeting: Gardening for wildlife by Brian Bainbridge. Brian is the President of the Indigenous Flora & Fauna Association. He has a small suburban garden and offers insight into the world of insects, reptiles, birds and the interaction with the other inhabitants such as plants and humans.



July

Meeting: We do not meet in July and wish safe travels to all our members as they head in directions unknown. Our next meeting is August 28th 2013.

HAKEA SEEDLING

By Cathy Powers

I can understand the joy of creating something new. This seems to have happened to me. I had a number of seeds from our *Hakea laurina* plants. I germinated a few these and grew plants to replace a few missing ones in our garden. One seed produced an unusual plant, leaves different than the parent plant and it grew very slowly.

I put it in the ground about three years ago and have been noting its slow growth as well as its small stature (80cm) ever since.

I was very excited to see a flower on it last year and wondered why it was so light in colour but figured it might be on the way out. This year, there are a large number of flowers all along the branches. They are about the size of the flowers from the *Hakea laurina* but a candy pink.



Equally noteworthy are the veins in the leaves which are consistent throughout.



NOMENCLATURE

The dictionary says this means a set or system of names or terms, especially those used in a particular science or art (botany would be one of those).

What's in a name?

Ricinocarpos pinifolius

The common name for this plant is Wedding Bush. It has a distribution in the Australian eastern states and Tasmania, being a conspicuous member of the coastal heath and woodland communities (especially when in flower during the spring).



Ricinocarpos = having fruit like *Ricinus* (castor oil plant), *pinifolius* refers to the similarity of the foliage to the genus *Pinus*. It is of the *Euphorbiaceae* family and was first described by the French botanist René L. Desfontaines. This plant is one of those which will attract many interesting insects to the garden as well as having a beautiful perfume. The flowers are used in floral arrangements and although I could not find specific details, I suspect that is where it gets its common name. The Wedding Bush makes an attractive plant for the garden, especially for the coastal areas on sandy soils. Having said that, it is difficult to propagate – germination of seeds virtually impossible and cuttings are difficult.

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

By Graeme Woods

When your propagating skills are like mine you need to look elsewhere for your supply of plants.

I have been very lucky to have met some wonderful people within our plant society and they have been very generous to this amateur from Gisborne. I could not count the number of plants I have received from Barb & David Pye and their enthusiasm has certainly rubbed off on me.

I have become good friends with Robert Brown from East Gippsland and I send large parcels of cuttings each year to him to graft. After talking Grevilleas to Mitchell APS, I was lucky enough to hook up with Brian & Lorraine Weir who propagate large numbers of plants and we do lots of swapping, but when it comes to hakeas – especially rare ones – no one holds a candle to Cathy Powers whose skills are extraordinary and she has taken the place of my dear friend Max Ewer whose abilities are legendary.

I have made our garden available to Kuranga Nursery for cutting material of the rarer grevilleas so that they can be spread to a wider area.

With the arrival of Russell Wait (Mr. Eremophila) to our district we can now help him and Beryl to build up their new garden at Riddles Creek. Our garden has gained some great eremophilas from the Waits' generosity.

So my secret to success is not just to cultivate plants but to cultivate FRIENDS.

PLANT SALE

The plant sale on May18 continued to attract hakea buyers and many of our plants were sold on the day. We also had some pre-orders which added another \$200 on to our takings. Since the sale Graeme has negotiated with Mitchell Group of APS and we have made another \$200 by selling our leftovers.

All of the other sellers were very positive in their comments after the sale. The church ladies also had a good morning, selling lots of soup, sandwiches, tea and cake. The only negative comments were about the weather which was rather cold. Thanks to all our members who helped on the day, particularly to Ron and Graeme who were there all day setting up and dismantling our stall as well as attending to customers.

By Barb Pye

Because of the success of our annual plant sale, we are able to keep our membership fees low. We should start planning next year's sale and any suggestions will be most welcome.

Already there have been a couple of observations that can improve the day.



AUSTRALIAN MYRTACEAE FAMILY

By Cathy Powers

Characteristics

- range from woody shrubs to tall trees
- leaves are aromatic, containing oil glands
- flowers may be white, pink, red, purple, yellow. They usually have five sepals and petals and many stamens. The stamens are long and conspicuous.
- in eucalypts, the petals and sepals are joined to form a cap over the bud
- fruit is generally woody

There are a large number of moth caterpillars that feed on a variety of Eucalyptus. The *Doratifera oxleyi* (Painted Cup Moth) has a pupa that is enclosed in a strong woody cocoon often attached on its side to a twig and it can be nine months before the moth takes flight. The female has brown wings while the male's wings are transparent.



The caterpillar has yellow stinging hairs which protrude when disturbed but fold into triangular pockets when



relaxed.

This is in contrast to the fact that Australia has only three species of Butterfly that prefer feeding on plants in the *Myrtaceae* family.

Eucalypts



Beautiful tree trunk



Callistemon



Melaleuca



Homoranthus: This genus is closely related to *Darwinia* and includes 31 species, endemic to Australia, with eight new species described for the first time in 2011. None of these are common in suburban gardens nor are they well-known to horticulture. Unlike most members of the *Myrtaceae*, the leaves are arranged opposite.



This image is by Brian Walters and can be found on the ANPSA website along with information about the plant *Homoranthus porteri* (previously known as *Darwinia proteri*). As indicated, the plant is very similar to *Homoranthus darwinioides* which is better known in cultivation. The latter is found in central west of New South Wales.

FROGS AND OTHER GARDEN INHABITANTS

BY Cathy Powers

I came home late one evening this past week and was greeted by a wonderful sight. Running (or should I say scampering) across our drive was a Brush-tailed Phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*). It reminded me of the squirrels I watched while visiting my parents recently.



Photo from NatureShare (Trevor Prescott)

The phascogale has a widespread but fragmented distribution throughout all states except Tasmania. As a result of habitat destruction and predation by the fox & feral cat, they have a vulnerable species status. They are nocturnal, eat smaller mammals, birds, lizards, insects (particularly spiders) and also drink nectar from flowering trees.



Photo from NatureShare.org.au (James Booth)
As moisture increases from badly needed

Rain, at least in our area, the frog noises have increased a little bit. When I started to sort through my young plants, for which Ron was appointed carer in my absence, I encountered the usual suspect between the pots.

The Southern Brown Tree Frog (*Litoria ewingii*) loves to sit in the dark area between the pots, getting moisture when the plants are watered and food as the insects visit the occasional flower.

This frog has a broad darker band running from the eyes down most of the back with a pale cream colour stripe running from the mouth to the arm. These frogs can be found in a wide variety of habitats, including suburban gardens, flooded grasslands or amongst wet marshy areas. They frequent wet and flooded areas for breeding but can be heard calling long distances from water.

It is an agile climber and jumper, highly adept at leaping to catch a flying insect. Males usually call from the ground, at the water's edge or in water, floating amongst the vegetation. The call is a series of rapid notes repeated 5 – 15 times 'creeeeee cree creee creee creee creee with the first note usually the longest.



Another frog that lives in our garden is the Southern Bullfrog (*Limnodynastes durmerlii*) also known as the Pobblebonk. A pale strip runs from the eye to the membrane covering the entrance to the ear. This frog has a very characteristic call, a single 'plonk' or 'bonk' repeated at intervals like the string of a banjo being plucked. When one frog starts calling, others usually join in. Calling is more intense after heavy rain, with males often congregating in large numbers.

Trailfinders

Australian Garden

This exhibit won 'best in show' honours, at the 2013 Chelsea Flower Show. Phillip Johnson is the designer and was one of the guest presenters at the 2012 FJC Rogers Seminar (3D Gardening – garden design using Australian native flora). The picture below, taken during the 2012 MIFGS, at his winning exhibit.



MEETINGS

May 2014

MYRTLE RUST

A big thanks to Jean Partridge who gave her maiden talk to the group. Alan and Jean had previously gone to a Myrtle Rust seminar in Geelong which provided them with a CD with lots of information. Fortunately none of our members had encountered Myrtle Rust in their gardens. It is most important to be able to identify this disease and report it if it is found. Affected material should not be handled, but instead reported to the DSE. If you see discolouration of the leaves with yellow spores present then you should report it.

As this disease is confined to the plant family *Myrtaceae* we followed Jean's talk with a plant table in the round so we could look at the flowers of *Myrtaceae* more closely. I had some positive comments after the meeting that this was a good way to present the plant table, so we will try it again at the next meeting, perhaps looking at the family *Proteaceae* a little more closely.

By Barb Pye

According to the Australian National Botanic Gardens website:

Four important groups (genera) in the family *Myrtaceae* are:

- ***Eucalyptus***
- ***Callistemon***
- ***Melaleuca***
- ***Leptospermum***

COMING EVENTS



July - Sept – Cranbourne Collection Exhibition. This is a rare opportunity to view the Cranbourne Collection (art) at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne.



August 24th - Maranoa Festival at Maranoa Gardens (Melway 46G7), Plant sales, free BBQ, displays and tours.

**ADVANCE NOTICE
BRISBANE RANGES
WILDFLOWER SHOW**

This event is happening **October 13th, 2013**. More news in future newsletters but mark your diary.



OUR WEBSITE:
www.runningpostman.org.au

Open Garden Scheme:
August 3rd & 4th –Girraween (home of APS Victoria member – Phil Hempel), 349 Diamond Cr Road, Diamond Creek
August 17th & 18th – Redgums, 30 Drakes Road, Drysdale. A Sam Cox designed garden with a wonderful variety of species, extensive rock work and more.

DID YOU KNOW?

At the most recent meeting of APS Victoria, four nominations for Certificate of Commendation were ratified. One of the successful nominations was our very own **JOAN CARR**.



Our group submitted her nomination and included the following notes:

Joan joined APS Victoria in 1983 and has been a member with the Melton & Bacchus Marsh District Group virtually since its inception. Our group recognised her valued contribution to the group in 2004 by awarding her with Honorary Life Membership. Joan shares her vast knowledge about Australian flora at each meeting and supplies cuttings from her own plants for members who like to propagate interesting flora.

Congratulations Joan – a recognition well deserved!

QUOTE OF THE NEWSLETTER

*It's not what you've got,
it's what you use that
makes a difference.*

--Zig Ziglar

Surprises in the Garden

My Own Fungi Family

By Cathy Powers

I came home to two garden surprises. The first is a family of fungi in the pot I have two *Brachyscome multifida* growing. In fact there are two groups in the same pot. Lots of twos in this paragraph. Of course these cute little things are actually the fruiting bodies of the fungi hyphae located deeper in the pot. Tomorrow they could be gone or perhaps more will appear.



The other exciting find is a very nice group of *Pterostylis robusta* growing in one of my orchid pots. I had just started watering them before I left and thought that perhaps the drier period while I was away might stop them from flowering.

Thank goodness I was wrong. These little beauties are a pleasure to behold.



So – now you can see my orchid growing technique is not failing, just slower than another household member's.

Australian Plants Society – Melton & Bacchus Marsh Inc.

Incorporated in Victoria: A0026204P

ABN: 68 053 689 781

APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Committee 2012/13

President	Barb Pye	5428 9369	
Vice President	Jean Partridge		
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Treasurer	Norris McCarthy	5428 9320	
Committee:	Ann Goetz, Graeme Woods, Jenny Morris, Julianne Diwell Cathy Powers – Newsletter editor		

URL for relevant internet websites:

Website: www.runningpostman.org.au

APS Victoria website : <http://www.apsvic.org.au/>

ANPSA website: <http://anpsa.org.au>

All contributions to the newsletter are gratefully received. Please send a word document and photos to the group's Gmail address. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me by email, snail mail or phone.

Postal Address:

P.O. Box 946

Bacchus Marsh, Victoria 3340

MEETINGS: 4th Wednesday of the month except July and December (doors open at 7.30pm)

VENUE: Dunvegan Cottage, Willows Historic Park
Cnr Reserve Rd & Nixon St, **Melton** **Melways:** 337 C9